

DONALD S. BEYER JR.  
8TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

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July 2, 2020

The Honorable Donald W. Lemons  
Supreme Court of Virginia  
100 North Ninth Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Chief Justice Lemons:

I respectfully request that you resume suspension for all new eviction cases as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are in the midst of the worst economic disaster since the Great Depression, which has been forcibly caused by a public health emergency. The unique nature of our current circumstance demands the most robust stabilizing response possible by government structures. The Commonwealth of Virginia has not fully reopened as a responsible, measured response appropriate to the public health circumstances. Because of this, there is not yet a fully functioning economy for those who are facing eviction to return to and it is unrealistic to expect normal economic exchange to resume.

While I commend the Court for honoring Governor Northam's initial request for an extension to the eviction moratorium in response to the coronavirus pandemic, I am concerned that the Court did not continue this extension and instead more recently lifted the moratorium on evictions. Courts in Virginia may begin to hear eviction cases this week. The eviction rate in Virginia before the pandemic was above the national average. Therefore, I am deeply concerned that this move will exacerbate the unprecedented economic hardship, creating further instability in the lives of our most vulnerable.

I formally request that you delay any upcoming eviction cases that have resulted because of COVID-19. Under the CARES Act, no tenant in a covered property can be evicted until August 24, 2020 as the Act requires 30 days notice of eviction to tenants after the moratorium ends on July 25, 2020. I'm therefore asking that you issue a moratorium on the filing and hearing of unlawful detainers and writs of eviction until at least August 24, 2020 to match the federal benchmark provided by the CARES Act.

I implore you to consider the unique nature of this crisis and to meet it with the seriousness it demands.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

CC: General District Court Judges